MCCOY

Funeral Oration on the
Death of Hon. Daniel Webster.

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FUNERAL ORATION

ON THE DEATH OF

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER,

BY

AMASA McCOY.

LETTERS FROM DISTINGUISHED SOURCES

IN CONNECTION WITH THE DEATH OF HON. DANIEL WEBSTER.

[From Hon. John K. Porter.]

ALBANY, Nov. 20, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR: I have just finished a second reading of your Funeral Oration on the death of Mr. Webster, and cannot refrain from congratulating you on the masterly ability which characterizes the production. I have read it with more gratification than any of the other numerous addresses which have been occasioned by his death. It seems to me to be in entire accordance with his own views of his claims upon the present and after times. It speaks bodly, what he felt deeply—the truth that his countrymen in refusing to requite his services by elevating him to the first office in the government, were equally unjust to him and to themselves. It does justice to his character and position. It speaks of him as he should be spoken of in history, and this with a beauty and eloquence, which cannot fail to make it peculiarly acceptable to the friends of Mr. Webster.

If the Oration should be published in pamphlet form, may I ask you to favor me with a copy. Yours very truly,

Prof. AMASA MCCOY. JOHN K. PORTER.

[From Rt. Rev. Bishop Kip.]

ALBANY, Nov. 23, 1852.

DEAR SIR: I received yesterday a number of the New-York Express, containing your Funeral Oration on the death of Daniel Webster; for which attention I suppose I am indebted to you. I avail myself therefore of an early opportunity to thank you for it, and express the pleasure which it afforded me. I have no hesitation in saying, that I consider it the most able I have seen on this event; and well worthy of the commendation bestowed upon it by the editor of the Express. Your estimate of WEBSTER'S character and writings strikes me as being peculiarly felicitous.

With my best wishes for your success in your literary career, I remain

Yours, very respectfully,

Prof. MCCOY. W. INGRAHAM KIP.

[From President Fillmore.]

WASHINGTON, Nov. 24th, 1852.

SIR: I had the honor to receive your note of the 16th inst., accompanied by a copy of your eulogy upon the late Daniel Webster, for which I beg leave to return you my thanks. My time has been so much occupied, that I have only been able to peruse a few paragraphs, with which I have been much pleased; and I doubt not you have done the subject ample justice.

Respectfully yours,

MILLARD FILLMORE.

[From Hon. Edward Everett.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, Nov. 29, 1852.

DEAR SIR: I have received to day your favor of the 26th, with the copy of your Oration which accompanied it. I am greatly indebted to you for giving me the opportunity of reading it in a corrected form. I have given it a hasty perusal, but amidst such incessant interruptions, and such preoccupation, that I have not done justice to myself in reading it. I have laid it carefully by for a leisure hour, with the sure promise of a rich intellectual treat. What I have read, sufficiently shows me, that you have entered deeply into the great theme.

Be pleased to accept my thanks for the kindness of your personal allusions, and believe me, with much regard,

Very respectfully, yours,

EDWARD EVERETT.

Prof. AMASA MCCOY, National Law School,
Ballston Spa, N. Y.

[From the Same.]

BOSTON, 1 Dec., 1855.

DEAR SIR: I am greatly obliged to you for a copy of your admirable eulogy on Mr. Webster; and for giving me an opportunity of re-perusing, in a revised form, what afforded me so much pleasure at its first appearance. * * * * * * * * * * * *

I remain, dear sir, with much consideration,

Very truly, yours,

Prof. McCOY, Albany, N. Y. EDWARD EVERETT.

[From the family of the late Hon. Jeremiah Mason.]

BOSTON, Nov. 25th, 1852.

DEAR SIR: The pleasure our family circle (that of the late Jeremiah Mason—Mr. Webster's early friend) have received this evening, while listening to an address of yours, delivered at the church in Ballston Spa, on the death of Mr. Webster, induces me to write to you to ask if the address has been published in pamphlet, and where we can obtain a number of copies.

Your eloquent and warm-hearted tribute to the memory of one who from infancy I have loved and revered, is my only apology for thus troubling you. With much respect,

MARIANNE MASON CRAFTS.

Prof. AMASA McCOY, Ballston Spa.

[From the Same.]

BOSTON, Jan. 3d, 1853.

MY DEAR SIR: I have sent you by the mail, several copies of your address on the death of Mr. Webster, for which we are indebted to Mr. Samuel Lawrence, who was so much interested in it, that he had it printed in pamphlet form. I notice several errors in it, but the imperfect newspaper report will account for that.

I am glad of the opportunity of sending a tribute so just and pleasant to friends at a distance. We have pleasant memories of the past summer, having been three times at Marshfield, and seen Mr. Webster in the home he loved so well. You admired the great man for his public acts, and so do I; but I cannot remember the time I did not *love* him as my father's early and constant friend—a friendship over which for thirty years never passed a cloud. Believe me, respectfully yours,

MARIANNE MASON CRAFTS.

A. McCOY, Esq., Ballston Spa, N. Y.

[From Messrs. Harper & Brothers.]

NEW-YORK, Nov. 30th, 1852.

DEAR PROFESSOR: * * * * * * * * * * *

We should have been glad to have received your Oration in time for publication in our Magazine (as what we have published in our December number does not suit us); but unfortunately, our January number (excepting the monthly summary) is already on the press.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

Yours, truly,

HARPER & BROTHERS.

[From Rev. Dr. Jacob, Principal King's College, Province N. Brunswick.]

KING'S COLLEGE, FREDERICTON, N. B.,
6th December, 1852.

DEAR SIR: * * I will not pretend to describe the admiration with which I have read this Elisoan eulogy on the apotheosis of your translated Elijah; but content myself with avowing the gratification with which I receive your testimony, that possibly an Englishman, at the head of such an institution as this from which I write, might not have irrecoverably participated in Provincial prejudices against the merits and memory of a wise and good, and therefore great American.

I shall transmit the Oration to . . . . Having already conceived, and I may add, declared, his high regard for such republicans as Channing, Everett, Story and Webster, he will I am sure be far from regretting that such a soul and voice as yours, should have migrated to a country where you can be duly heard, felt, and appreciated.

I have one remark to offer on the life, and another on the death of the departed. On the life, and its attributed imperfections—that it must be the maxim of the politician (and might not I add, of the moralist and divine?) to take men as they are, and make the best of them. On the death, with its painful and disappointing circumstances—that tragedy (as long since observed by the great critic), above all other representations, is adapted to purify the human soul. The martyrs of every description are the "chosen vessels" to communicate the riches of immortal truth, spirit, and life.

Pray favor me with future communications, and believe me, Sir,

Your sincerely obliged,

EDWIN JACOB.

Prof. AMASA McCOY, Ballston Spa, N. Y., U. S.

[From Hon. Robt. C. Winthrop.]

BOSTON, 6 Dec., 1852.

MY DEAR SIR: Your obliging note of the 26th ultimo, was duly received. I have read with great interest the Oration delivered by you on the death of Mr. Webster. It is a most vigorous and eloquent production, and cannot fail to have been highly impressive in delivery.

* * * * * * * * * * * *

For the greater part of the last five and twenty years, I have enjoyed his intimate acquaintance and friendship, and nobody has a higher opinion of his intellectual ability. The services which he has rendered his conntry in time of need, have been in the highest degree important, and his printed volumes are a treasury of wisdom and eloquence.

While therefore, I might differ from you in a few passages of your Eulogy, I appreciate the justice and appropriateness of its general tone.

I venture to send you a copy of a speech of mine in the House of Representatives, just before I succeeded Mr. Webster in the Senate, which will give you my views on the question at issue, should you care to know them.

Pray send me your Address in pamphlet, if it is so published.

Thanking you once more, for your friendly attention, I remain, Dear Sir, with great regard,

Yours faithfully,

AMASA McCOY, Esq. ROBT. C. WINTHROP.

[From Hon. Rufus Choate.]

BOSTON, Dec. 11th, 1852.

To AMASA McCOY, Prof. of Rhetoric.

DEAR SIR: I had read a report of your Funeral Oration [on the death of Daniel Webster] with great interest, before you were so kind as to put me in possession of a corrected copy, and I have reperused that with heightened interest and appreciation.

I hope it may not seem arrogant or indelicate to say so, but I regard your discourse on the whole, the most adequate to the great subject which I have read.

Your limits, any limits, would not suffice for elaborating and consummating any important view on the grand aggregate of the conception you had of him. But the outline is perfect, I think, and within your limits the detail is just, vivid, and generous.

What a tribute of eloquent feeling he has attracted and deserved! *Multis*—OMNIBUS—*flebilis*.

If you publish your discourse in pamphlet, I should be most happy to know where I can obtain that also.

I am most truly, Your obedient servant,

RUFUS CHOATE.

[From Mayor W. W. Seaton.]

WASHINGTON, 25th Dec., 1852.

MY DEAR SIR: I feel very sensibly the honor you have done me, in the present, namely, of a copy of your admirable Oration on Mr. Webster.

I have read the Oration with pleasure and instruction; and if we durst venture to discriminate among the multitude of similar productions, from the pulpit and chair, which have reached us, I should be glad to place yours, or at least some portions of it, in the National Intelligencer. It would be read with deep gratification by all of Mr. Webster's countrymen, and

especially by all who were honored with his friendship, and who enjoyed, as I did for so many years, the privilege of familiar intercourse with him, and thereby learned to appreciate fully his great and shining qualities of head and heart.

I am, Sir, your obliged and very obedient servant,

To Prof. AMASA McCOY. W. W. SEATON.

[From Hon. Joseph Howe, Provincial Secretary of Nova Scotia.]

HALIFAX, Nova Scotia, July 12, 1853.

MY DEAR SIR: I have read with infinite gratification, your Funeral Oration on Webster. To depict a great man truthfully, there must be elements of greatness in the artist. Webster could not have pronounced a more eloquent eulogium upon himself. * * * * * * * *

Pray send me from time to time, any thing of yours that is printed.

Yours truly,

JOSEPH HOWE.

[From Hon. Samuel Lawrence.]

BOSTON, Jan. 17th, 1854.

MY DEAR SIR: Your very kind favor of yesterday is at hand, and I hasten to reply; thanking you for the Canadian notices of your lectures, and a copy of Mr. Choate's note to you.

I fully agree with him in his estimate of your Oration on the whole. It is the best I have seen, always excepting his own, at Hanover, last summer.

Should you ever come to this place, I beg of you to let me have the pleasure of seeing you; and remain most truly,

Your obedient servant,

Prof. AMASA McCOY, Ballston Spa, N. Y. SAM'L LAWRENCE.

[From Hon. William H. Seward.]

WASHINGTON, July 31, 1854.

DEAR SIR: * * * * * * * * * * *

I beg to thank you even so late as this, for your kindness in sending me a copy of your Eulogium on Mr. Webster. I read it with unmingled admiration. It is indeed a performance of rare ability; and while it is faultless in execution, there is no error of opinion in it, which the occasion and the circumstances do not fully excuse.

I am, Dear Sir, very respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

AMASA McCOY, Ballston Spa, N. Y. WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

[From Fletcher Webster, Esq.]

BOSTON, Aug. 3d, 1854.

AMASA McCOY, Esq., Dear Sir: I am very much your debtor for your kind note of 30th July.

Your statement that it was his published writings that made you an American and a Republican, is very grateful; and is perhaps the highest compliment that could be paid to him, or his memory, by any individual.

The fact I shall, with your leave, produce in the forth-coming volume; and perhaps, it will best appear by the publication of your note to me.

I remember the same remark to have been made by you in your most eloquent and beautiful address.

I shall proceed with the work as rapidly as I can, and hope to do no discredit to the subject. Renewing my thanks to you for your letter,

I am, my dear Sir, very truly yours,

FLETCHER WEBSTER.

[From Chief Justice Williams, of Connecticut.]

HARTFORD, May 28, 1856.

DEAR SIR: I beg you to excuse me for *that*, for which I cannot excuse myself, and I will at this late hour return my cordial thanks for the copy of your eloquent address on the death of Mr. Webster. I read it with great pleasure, and think it worthy of the high encomiums it has received. It came too at a time, when I was about uniting moré permanently, many pamphlets on that subject in a volume; among which I need not say yours will occupy a prominent place.

I am very respectfully yours,

AMASA McCOY, Esq., Albany, N. Y. THOMAS S. WILLIAMS.

FUNERAL ORATION

ON THE DEATH OF

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER,

DELIVERED AT A COMMEMORATION IN THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BALLSTON SPA, N. Y.,

MONDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 8, 1852.

BY AMASA McCOY.

THIRD EDITION.

BOSTON:
C. C. P. MOODY, PRINTER, 52 WASHINGTON STREET.
1856.

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE TO THIRD EDITION.

The first pamphlet edition of this Oration was printed from the newspaper report to the order, and at the expense, of Hon. Samuel Lawrence, of Boston; one of the most devoted personal friends and admirers of the great deceased. The whole edition was circulated in Boston and elsewhere, among those to whom the blow, as in the case of Mr. Lawrence, came nearest and heaviest. This would have spoke well for this tribute in honor of Mr. Webster, had there been no other in print. But it makes it much more emphatic and pointed, when we recall the fact that very many similar efforts were already accessible in pamphlet form. And from a letter, written on the birth-day of Mr. Webster, 1856, we gather that lapse of time has only confirmed Mr. Lawrence's first opinion: "I fully agree with Mr. Choate in his estimate of Mr. McCoy's Oration. It is the best I have seen, always excepting his own at Hanover, last summer."

The death of Webster so stirred the emotions of his contemporaries, that the most eloquent and gifted of the American Orators who survived him, exceeded themselves in doing him honor; and the undersigned cannot refrain from expressing the hope, that some publishing house will put in one or two volumes all the best of these numerous tributes. Hon. Rufus Choate, in his admirable Oration delivered at Dartmouth College, 27th of July, 1853, thus confessed himself struck with the splendor and richness of this aggregate tribute:—

"And yet I hardly know what there is in public biography, what there is in literature, to be compared in its kind, with the variety and beauty and adequacy of the series of discourses through which the love and grief, and deliberate reasoning admiration of America for this great man, have been uttered."

Hon. Edward Everett, at the Celebration of the Seventy-Fourth Anniversary of Mr. Webster's Birth-day, Boston, 17th January, 1856, expressed his sense of the extraordinary merit and enduring interest of these Orations, as follows:—

"I do not rise to pronounce the eulogy of Daniel Webster. That work was performed, at the time of his lamented decease, in almost every part of the country, and by a greater number of the distinguished writers and speakers of the United States than have, in any former instance, with the single exception of Washington, paid this last office of respect to departed worth. It was in many cases performed with extraordinary ability. * * * * * * whose performances, besides doing noble justice to this great theme, will take a permanent place in the literature of the country."

The Publisher of this pamphlet feels very certain that it will interest the friends of Mr. Webster, and the admirers of this Oration, (the only considerable one, as far as he knows, by a person of foreign birth.*) when he informs them that among the orders on file for this his Third Edition, is one of 200 copies from a distinguished citizen in California; and who says in writing from San Francisco, that he has "read it with such delight and admiration, that I desire to put a copy in every Division Room and Library in the State of California, where I believe, it will be read and preserved with much interest."

C. C. P. MOODY.

52 Washington Street, Boston.

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* Mr. McCoy is now a naturalized citizen of the United States; is Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory in the Law School of the Albany University, and Editor of the distinguished Temperance Monthly, The Prohibitionist, published at Albany, by the New York State Temperance Society.

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

THE undersigned, having issued a pamphlet edition of the following Oration, for private circulation by an eminent merchant of this city, very frequent enquiries have been made of him for extra copies. These, together with the high commendation bestowed upon it by the most eminent friends of Mr. WEBSTER, have induced the publication of this second edition. The New York Express, the first paper in which the discourse was printed, accompanied the report with these remarks:—

"We publish to-day a beautiful oration, delivered by AMASA MCCOY, Esq., of Ballston Spa, N. Y., and for the past two years Professor of Rhetoric in the National Law School. The style of the orator in the delivery was faultless, and so riveted was the attention of the vast audience, that a pin might have been heard to fall in any part of the edifice during the pronouncing of the eulogy. Professor McCoy is yet a young man, and he has but to pursue the path he has marked out, to acquire a world-wide renown as an eloquent public speaker."—*New York Express.*

It is an admirable oration. It will be read with deep gratification by all of Mr. WEBSTER's countrymen.—*Hon. W. W. Seaton, Ed. National Intelligencer.*

A more sublime oration, a more splendid burst of eloquent eulogium, we never had the pleasure of perusing —*St. John* (*N. B.*) *Courier.*

I have no hesitation in saying, that I consider it the most able I have seen on this event, and well worthy the commendation bestowed upon it by the Express. His estimate of Webster's character and writings strikes me as being singularly felicitous — *Rev. W. Ingraham Kip, D. D., of Albany.*

I have read the oration with great interest. It is a most vigorous and eloquent production —*Hon. Robert C. Winthrop.*

After reading it amid incessant interruptions, I have laid it by for a leisure hour, with the sure promise of a rich intellectual treat. Professor McCoy has entered deeply into the great theme.—*Hon. Edward Everett.*

I have re-perused Prof. McCoy's Funeral Oration on Mr. WEBSTER with heightened interest and appreciation. I regard this discourse, on the whole, as the most adequate to the great subject which I have read.—*Hon. Rufus Choate.*

Though these are but a part of the evidences of the favor with which the Oration has been regarded by those most competent to pronounce upon its merits, they are surely more than enough to warrant the publisher in believing, that in making it accessible to the public in a better form than it has yet appeared, he is adding, in his way, to the numerous tributes to the illustrious deceased, and administering to the gratification of his sorrowing countrymen.

C. C. P. MOODY.

52 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON.

DIRGE.

[As a part of the preliminary exercises, the following Dirge composed for the occasion by the distinguished American poet, ALFRED B. STREET, Esq., of Albany, was sung by the Choir, in a very solemn and pathetic manner, to the venerable tune of 'Old Hundred.']

A shade like night. is o'er us flung;
Our Eagle's wing in grief is hung;
Our brightest star the sky hath cross'd!
Its lordliest plume that wing hath lost.

But though the orb hath left our eyes,
It but glides on to future skies;
And memory of the plume will bring
New strength to lift that spreading wing.

His stately form in death is laid;
But his proud glory ne'er shall fade.
On Time's last wave, no brighter fame
Shall glow than that of WEBSTER'S name.

ORATION.

The tolling bells of twice ten thousand steeples, proclaim that we have met with no ordinary loss. Populous and opulent cities, thousands of miles from each other, celebrate these obsequies with all that can engage the imagination, and impress the heart. Even in a retired village, which makes no pretensions to parade, and where there is nothing of magnificence, save the sombre pomp of nature herself, the citizens of Ballston Spa, without distinction of party; the Board of Supervisors representing every town in the County of Saratoga; the members of the Ballston Institute, coming from different sections of the State; the students of the National Law School, representing more than half the States of the Union; have assembled under these sable hangings, to join in the sublime lament which is now being sung by the nation. These expressions of public sorrow, however

numerous and solemn, can be of no use, it is true, to the dead. But they may justly administer to the consolation of the living. To echo words once uttered by those lips, which because they are sealed in death, we are now convened: "the tears which flow, and the honors that are paid, when the founders of the Republic die, give hope that the Republic itself will be immortal."

Daniel Webster, Secretary of State in the United States, died at his farm at Marshfield, on the morning of the 24th of October. Ten days ago, his mortal remains were laid away in his family vault. At the time of his death he had passed, some nine months, the limit assigned by the Psalmist to mortal man. Yet had we never come to associate with him the idea of decay. The whole of this long period was filled up with busy and laborious days in the service of his country. He was born, he lived, he died, in a century and a country of Freedom. He first saw the light amid her mountain home, and he died where she lifts her radiant form to enjoy the ocean breeze.

His death, since its occurrence, has engrossed the columns of the press; it has put the marts

and the harbors of commerce in mourning; it has been solemnly noticed by the bar and the bench in the Courts of Justice; in the departments of State; and in the mansion of the Executive. And what bespeaks still more a public sense of calamity, it even stopped, and that within a week of the day of ballot, the whole machinery of a National Election.

Meantime, while we have been witnessing this first spontaneous outburst of sorrow, and while more elaborate and sumptuous expressions are but just beginning, these unwelcome tidings have crossed the Atlantic, and deepened the grief of a nation already, like ourselves, clothed in the habiliments of mourning. The event by this time has been noticed with honor in hundreds of English journals; it has afflicted the members of the profession in the courts of Westminster; it has been mentioned on the floors of Parliament; it has penetrated the cloisters of Oxford and Cambridge. And before the action yet to be taken by the State Legislatures, the Supreme Federal Judiciary, and the Houses of Congress; the intelligence, in the order of its course, will have carried grief to the heart of every lover of freedom in the nations of Europe;

and where less will be expressed than felt, because of the padlock on the lip of Liberty. So that, after all that has been done, and all that will be, that which will not be done, will redound most to the honor of the great American.

The public journals have certainly laid the country under many obligations, by their incredible industry in collecting facts respecting this extraordinary life. By so doing they have not only contributed vastly to our edification, but I submit that every fresh particular only increases our respect for the character of the deceased. The colossal proportions of his intellect had become a proverb; but the impression I think is now general, that great injustice has been done to the qualities of his heart. The tongue of scandal had been busy in bold affirmations respecting great frailties and infirmities. No reflecting man ever doubted that much of this was the invention of political rancor, and a curious proneness there is to seek for weakness in the great. Whatever of this is true, no one should now seek to extenuate, out of regard to the influence of example. The ancient maxim, that nothing should be said of the dead but what is favorable, the better ethics of our time

justly repudiate. History, when true to its mission, is a dread tribunal; and while it will not allow the least injustice to the dead, it will not be unmindful of its duty to the living. In the mean time, it cannot be denied that many persons whose minds had been abused, are taken by surprise by the numerous and authentic evidence of the genial excellencies which gave warmth and coloring to his character. The nation had been so engrossed with the grandeur of his public career, that few were prepared for any such statement as that his greatness dilated when he entered the social circle. And it is fit in this temple of worship to invite those, if any such there be, who have assumed to use his name to give respectability to their own delinquencies, to ponder now upon some other things. Let them remember that vulgar infidelity never polluted his lips. That nothing ever escaped him in his public speeches, nothing in private conversation, disrespectful to the truths of Christianity. That he was a devout believer in divine Revelation. That he studied the scriptures more than many whose high vocation it is to expound them. That he was faithful in his attendance upon the services of the sanctuary.

That the attributes of the Deity, as displayed in his works, overflowed his capacious nature with the enthusiasm of devotion.

And for my own part, I join with those who say that none of his great deeds in life, give them such ideas of moral grandeur, as the manner of his death. I see him shake the Capitol in his wrath, when a violent hand is laid upon the Constitution; and yet it does not affect me with such an elevated sense of human greatness, as to mark the meek serenity with which he suffers the pangs of death, and abides the good pleasure of his God. His implicit faith in the blood of Christ, his parting blessings upon his family and domestics, his unmurmuring resignation in the last mortal agony,—tell me, ye who minister at the altar, was not here enough to have suggested to the Christian poet, all his sublime conceptions of 'the chamber where the good man meets his fate?'

When Mark Anthony appeared before the citizens of Rome, to pronounce his funeral oration over the dead body of Cæsar, his first endeavor was to refute the principal accusation of Cæsar's enemies. A grave charge has been preferred against the deceased whom we deplore,

in connection with one of his last acts in the Senate, and which it is not to be concealed, in the minds of many, and of some before me, rests at this moment as a cloud upon his memory. The charge is now of over two years' standing. What men have urged and insisted upon again and again, becomes rooted and grounded in their very nature. The matter in question has become a part of that feeling, hardly less inveterate than religious bigotry, the spirit of party. How idle it would be to think of removing it, I am well enough persuaded; but that the subject would be referred to on such an occasion might naturally be expected. I deem it expedient to touch upon it in very brief terms at this stage of my remarks.

Some persons go as far as this. The Compromise Measures adopted by Congress in 1850, tended to perpetuate a great evil. Evil should not be done even to sustain the arch of the Union. To such persons I would say, what I may not now reason out, that there are numerous evils which are the natural consequences of society. But to disband society would be a greater evil. Whoever remains in society, then, acts upon the principle of choosing the least of

evils. Society is held together only by mutual compromise. The science of governing to a great extent, is but the science of expedients. The philosopher deals only in abstract truth, and may always be consistent with himself. But between the theories and the practical action of legislators and rulers, there must sometimes be a variance.

Such extreme ground, however, is probably occupied by no one present. You frankly admit, if you could believe that the Compromise measures were essential to the integrity of the Union, you would no longer condemn those who voted for them. But you hold that there was no danger of any section seceding; and I understand your chief ground of confidence is this: that secession would have been contrary to their own interests. I ask, is it an unheard-of thing that men should act contrary to their own interests? especially men of pride and spirit, and most especially when they believe, or even imagine that any injustice is being done them? Were there not thousands of men, as intelligent and as honest as yourselves, who did believe some such compromise necessary? And have not multitudes who then condemned such legis-

lation, since avowed their approval? Was not the measure acquiesced in by hundreds of ministers of religion, whose learning and piety make them the objects of reverence? Did a majority of both houses of Congress, did so many of their number, of patriotism hitherto above suspicion, walk in open day to the shambles of corruption, and traffic away the accumulated honor of life? Did Millard Fillmore do so; did Henry Clay; did Daniel Webster? When Nullification was coiling its fatal folds around this body politic, entire fruit of the revolution, and just about to send to its extremities the icy chill of death, you need not be told whose mighty arm it was that slew the monster as with a battle axe. 'If you have writ your annals true, alone he did it.' This great champion of public liberty, whose whole fame was associated with its defence, and who saw that many would now brand him as an apostate and traitor—do you believe that he was condemned also by his own conscience? Have those who have been so unsparing of censure, ever summed up the penalty he paid for taking this step? Reproach, reproach, from how many quarters—with what bitterness—and how long sustained!

And this from oldest friends, upon whom the heart had learned to lean for support. The stab of Brutus, you know, that was the unkindest cut of all. If then, my friend and fellow-citizen, you cannot yet view this matter as I do, but must still insist in your heart, that he was guilty of a grievous fault,—at least, you will not refuse to remember how grievously he hath answered it. And while no powers of persuasion can efface from your memory the single evil you have contended he did, that American heart within you, whose depths he has so often stirred as with notes of battle and of victory, is surely too just and magnanimous to insist upon interring with his bones all that he ever did of good.

In common with the whole country, fellow-citizens, you have frequently reviewed, since its termination, Mr. Webster's great career. If it had not occurred to you before, you must now be impressed with the fact, that of the many distinguished citizens of his day, few owed less to fortuitous circumstances. Mr. Webster was not a man whose fame grew up over night. He owed his eminence to no accident, no compromise of factions, no chance of battle, no

freak of fortune. None of his influence was acquired by flattering the people, but only by serving them. He more than once opposed a farther introduction into the government of the popular element; and in doing so, used the whole weight of his influence and talent. He not only repudiated the idea of a Democracy; for that is dreamed of by no one. But he evidently had faith in nothing less than the representative Republic, with all its checks and balances, as framed by the fathers. He acquired none of his distinction then, by introducing sweeping reforms in government. Indeed I undertake to say, that the most general characteristic of that whole career which the country is now contemplating with so much reverence, is that of the great conservator. He borrowed no honor from office, for his mere entry into it covered it with lustre forever; and whoever might be elevated to the Presidency, Webster still continued the most eminent citizen of the Republic. The explanation of Mr. Webster's fame, consists simply, in wonderful native endowments, disciplined by the last severity of culture, and displayed in professional and public service. To eloquence, to law, to civil polity, he devoted

more study, than most public men to all united. If Buffon, as he said, owed ten or twelve volumes of his writings to his servant, who forced him to rise at six,—it would be interesting, if it could be ascertained, to know what proportion of Mr. Webster's greatness is ascribable to his having risen at four.

The extinction of this great light afflicts no class more sorely than that scattered brotherhood who make up the republic of letters. In our part of that realm he was chief. No other man in this country ever exercised in so large a measure that sway over the human mind which belongs to literature. His supremacy over men was in proportion as they were educated. In Boston he reigned in all the sovereignty of reason. Had this whole country been made up of Bostons—he would long since have been called, by acclamation, to the Chief Magistracy of the Union.

More than any other American of his day, more than any Englishman, Mr. Webster's style was chaste, lucid, and perspicuous. Every sentence was a crystal. He scattered among the people no ambiguous words. When Webster had spoken, you might differ from him indeed;

but you knew his meaning. Whatever he touched, he not only adorned, but he shed over it a perpetual light. Such was the literary excellence of Mr. Webster's speech, that its influence did not cease with its delivery. There was always a charm over the printed report, that attracted and captivated innumerable readers. There were men of his day, and Mr. Clay was one of them, who exercised a more talismanic sway over their immediate hearers; but who spoke with such commanding eloquence to the nation? When it was known that Webster was to speak, is it any exaggeration to say that the Republic was one eager auditory? Give me a name if you can, for glory like this: never to have risen, but millions hung upon his lips; never to have sat down, but millions were wiser men and better patriots. Webster's printed speeches were re-read, and put carefully away, and committed. How many of his sentences, laden with noble truth and glowing patriotism, have become familiar as household words! Plutarch informs us that so thoroughly were the priests instructed in the writings of Numa, that the law-giver, assured that they would be preserved in spirit and in letter,

ordered them to be burned with his body. Such is the impression made upon the minds of his countrymen, by the productions of Webster, that had all written record of them been interred with his remains, every principle and precept could be collected from the memory of living men; and all his great orations, I doubt not, could be restored to print, word for word.

His sentiments are not only engraven on the minds of his countrymen, but they blend themselves with the surface of the country itself. Spots which the blood of our fathers has consecrated, this great master of eloquence has made classic. Even Bunker Hill, of hallowed memory, has borrowed additional interest and renown from his transcendent powers of speech. They have given birth indeed to the noblest monument of that eventful day. Any country, any people could have erected the granite obelisk. Of his contemporaries, who but the great New England orator could have delivered such discourses? It is not intimated that Bunker Hill Monument is not everything that could reasonably be asked. Lifting itself from that memorable summit, "rising over the land, and over the sea, and visible at their homes, to three

hundred thousand citizens of Massachusetts," it is indeed a stupendous structure. And yet it is less imposing and majestic than the orations pronounced there by Webster. "Towering high above the column which our hands have builded, beheld, not by a single city, or a single state, ascends the colossal grandeur" of these sublimer remembrancers.

The influence of Mr. Webster's speeches was not limited to this country. In this connection, permit one born under another government, and among a people at that time prejudiced beyond belief, to say that my own experience furnishes me with data, which from the good fortune of your birth, you would probably omit to take into the account. Happening to fall in with these great productions, I not only bowed in homage to the talents of the author, but immediately conceived respect, then admiration, and before I got through, enthusiasm and reverence, for the history, the great men, and the institutions of America. I said to myself that in the wonderful attributes of this great orator, and the heroic virtues of his countrymen whom he celebrates, is more than realized, what in Berkley, a century and a quarter ago, seemed an extravagant

flight, even for poetry; that here should rise up, and here should be sung,

> "The good and great inspiring epic rage,
> The wisest heads and noblest hearts."

Thus does it happen, that for the high privilege of American citizenship, for such a proud distinction, and crowning felicity, I am indebted to the sway of his living words, to whom in death, from the fullness of a swollen heart, I now make this poor acknowledgment. Plato thanked heaven that he was born in the same age with Socrates. What a heart should I have, if it did not overflow with gratitude, that I have not only been thus far contemporary with the deceased, have experienced the divine luxury of his thought, and heard two orations from his lips, but that I am now entitled against the world, to claim a share in his immense renown.

> "Praise enough
> To fill th' ambition of a private man,
> That Webster's language was his mother tongue,
> And Clay's great name compatriot with his own."

I have spoken of my native Province as at that time prejudiced beyond belief, against whatever pertained to the neighboring Republic. I rejoice to do it justice. Such was the respect they had come to entertain for the citizen now

deceased, that when in one of its villages* the announcement was made that he was dead, the people gave expession to their feelings in a salute of an hundred guns from English artillery.

Not only in the Hulsemann letter, at the Plymouth dinner, and on the Greek question, but on numerous other occasions, Mr. Webster's resistless eloquence, defining the position, and speaking the sentiment of the American Republic, has fulmined over Europe,

"To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne."

Those who make it out so clearly to their own satisfaction that he was guilty of such astounding apostacy, let them not fail to notice this. That his death breaks a spell of dread to Absoluteism. Tyrants rejoice, that Webster has fallen!

A full survey of the public life and services of Mr. Webster, can be taken only by his biographer. Let those who assume such an enumeration, not omit to include the following. That out of the treasury of his single intellect, he has paid another installment on the debt of civilization, we owe the mother Empire. It consists not alone in the light he has shed upon the sci-

* St. Stephens, New Brunswick.

ences of international law, and civil polity. Virgil considered himself covered with glory, when he was called a pillar of the Latin tongue; and English scholars, in the fine enthusiasm, and high magnanimity of letters, will acknowledge with feelings of admiration and gratitude, that even to that gorgeous temple, whose base, and whose dome were the productions of a Shakspeare, the doric contributions of the great American orator, have given additional strength, sublimity and grandeur.

Cicero thought Plato used such language as Jupiter would, had he talked in the Greek The English of Webster suggests the same notion of majesty. And if Cicero had given us his idea of the fabled deity in the act and attitude of speaking, it is by no means certain that he would have invested him with a more imposing presence. Conceptions of this kind are furnished in poetry, which have been things of joy to the scholars of many generations. But I question whether votaries of letters most familiar with the heathen Jove of Homer, the Trojan leader of Virgil, the royal Dane of Shakspeare, and the primitive great sire of Milton, ever had in their mind's eye, a figure which so

impressed the heart, as when they gazed upon the solemn front, and eye sublime of our illustrious countryman. Not only have European masters in sculpture hung over his bust enamoured, as a model beyond even their finest ideal; but persons of no culture whatever, equally strangers to his fame, and to the enthusiasm of poetry and art, have given involuntary utterance to the sentiment of the admiring Queen of Carthage—

"*Quem sese ore ferens!*"*

These outward indications of power, without example in his own age, added immensely, as might be supposed, to the grandeur of his spoken eloquence. Of other orators, the audience made his present speech the gauge of his intellect. And I suppose it often happened that Mr. Webster did his utmost; but with that massive amplitude of brow before you, and that vision and faculty divine, it was impossible to believe it. Bring forward what he might, you still said, 'the greatest is behind.' Make ever so great a conquest, the spectators reported:

"Yet half his strength, he put not forth, but check'd
His thunder in mid-volley."

* "How great does he show himself in his countenance!"

And when the historian, glorying in his theme, shall have recounted to the men of another age, the mighty feats of his genius, it needs must cap the climax of their wonder to be told; that such was his superb exterior, and so vast in promise, that he left his contemporaries in doubt, had he been called to meet a crisis so much greater, or grapple with an adversary so much more formidable, whether he had it not in him, to have achieved in one single triumph, what would have eclipsed the sum of his others.

It would be very proper in the presence of so much aspiration for professional honor, to dwell at some length upon the character of the deceased as a lawyer. And in adequate hands, what more noble theme for discourse. But an attempt at such an analysis of his mind, or such summing up of his attainments by any one who has not devoted to the law his 'twenty years of vigils,' would amount in my esteem, to irreverent presumption. Let us leave this part of the subject then, after expressing only what is in the mind of every educated man in the country. His published arguments at the bar, have never yet been spoken of as less than consummate models of forensic discussion. And the propor-

tion of his admirers is not small, who insist that this is the theatre where the prowess of his mind achieved its greatest feats. As has been said by an old man eloquent, a patriarch of college presidents, respecting Hamilton: "he strode through the cause with the club of Hercules, and left nothing living in his path." If you inquire who stands at the head of the profession in any given city or State, different persons will give you a different name; whereas not only now in the generosity of funeral eulogium, but any time during the last third of his life, and that by universal acclaim, the first place at the Bar of the American Union was accorded to Webster. And when of all this assemblage there remains not on earth the slightest vestige of remembrance, posterity will marvel as we do now, at this amazing triumph of intellect; to have won the palm which cost Pinckney and Wirt the sustained struggle of a life; and yet at the same time, in the higher path of statesmanship, which they almost entirely avoided, to have clomb to equal pre-eminence; and in addition to all this, and perhaps for the first time in the history of America, to have given a classic to the language.

A glance still briefer at Mr. Webster's achievements in the field of diplomacy. They contributed very greatly to extend his European fame, and certainly rank among his highest claims to the gratitude of his own country. The announcement of his death will come home with great additional effect to Americans who are now travelling abroad; for they have felt, as they tell us, that his name ever surrounded them as with a guard of protection and of honor. His correspondence with the English Envoy in 1842, not only shed vast light upon the law of nations, and affords a sublime illustration of the compass and divinity of human reason; but they cleared up many difficulties between the United States and England, which at intervals for half a century, had threatened to involve these countries in all the horrors of war. They were settled by this great son of peace, satisfactorily, and forever; without war, and without dishonor. And it may be urged with justice, that the papers which at that time emanated from the Secretary of State, contributed greatly to inaugurate a new era in the intercourse of nations. They impressed upon the general heart of the world, what Richelieu

utters in handing his weapon of war to his page:

"Take away the sword—
States can be saved without it!"

It has come to be a very frequent remark, "What a pity our greatest men cannot be President;" and surely there never has been more occasion for regret than in the case of Webster. What a superb piece of rhetoric would it have been, what a feast, what a banquet of reason, and with what a glow of patriotic pride would every American have perused his inaugural address. What annual messages would have illustrated the policy, and enriched the literature of the country. What dignity, what strength, what splendor in his administration. The Presidential chair would have borrowed lustre from the talents and the fame of such an incumbent. For the first time since the line of Revolutionary Presidents, the highest office in the nation would have been adorned with its highest statesmanship. The Union, the Constitution, Peace, and every great interest of peace, would have smiled secure under a ruler at once so wise, so mild, so firm. There are many persons present, differing from him on questions of

public interest, who would not have voted for him; but there is no one in this audience, there is no one in this Republic, who would not have contemplated with proud emotion, institutions which could first produce such a citizen, and then give him his place according to the specific gravity of nature.

Such would have been the general feeling at home. While abroad, and among foreign powers, as it was said of Washington, it is not probable that any prince or potentate of his day, would have commanded more respect and consideration. Throned emperors and kings would have read in this grand embodiment, all the elements that mould up our conception of a consummate magistrate:

"And by these claim their greatness, not by blood."

It is usual to say on such occasions that the Presidency could have added nothing to his fame. Such a reflection may possibly be of some solace to afflicted feeling, but it certainly will not stand the test of logical analysis. Mr. Webster, it is true, was a more eminent man than any President of his day; indeed the Secretaries of State for many years, form a more distinguished line of Statesmen than the Presidents. Still the

highest post in the government would have made even Webster's talents more conspicuous. "Pyramids are pyramids in vales." Doubtless; yet however great the structure, it is imposing in proportion to the elevation of its site. Mr. Webster, nevertheless, amassed a reputation on so huge a scale, that any such regrets on his account are almost unconscionable. Five million votes, fifty million votes, could not have done for him, what he did for himself. The truth is, that regrets of this kind, and indeed this whole aggregate of sorrow, spreading the Commonwealth as with a pall, is not for the dead, but for the living. And I, the humblest of all my fellow-citizens,—lifted into notice but for an hour by this sad occasion, and soon to return as is my wont, to the pursuits of retirement—with no title to consideration, save as I utter the words of truth—the least of all priests in this vast service of the grave; yet as such, possessing the ear of the congregation assembled—I assume to summon the American community into the forum of its own conscience. I arraign it before the bar of the world. I anticipate the verdict of posterity. Ye who have ears to hear, and hearts to understand, incline to

what I say, for I speak no idle words. Hearken to the judgment of your children, and your children's children, to be affirmed by every succeeding age. And this it is: That in withholding from one who partook so largely of the spirit, and the wisdom, and the patriotism of Washington, the highest power for good which the Constitution entrusts to a single citizen,—*A duty has not been performed. A work of patriotism has not been completed.*

Friends and fellow-citizens: If such thoughts afflict us with compunctious visitings, and full well I know they do, let us remember that they are of use only as they beget resolutions for the future. For the past, they are unavailing. Daniel Webster, is no longer among the living. The glory of the Forum, the chief of the Senate, the mighty minister, great man of language,

"Farewell, a long farewell, to all thy greatness!"

That drama of vigorous heroism is closed. On a stage, not darkened, but rather of heightened splendor, the curtain has fallen. Not as the ordinary great; nor yet as Socrates, like a philosopher; but with the sublimer exit of a Christian, he has gone from our sight forever. Oh, if this were not the solemn fact—if you had but

just awakened from sleep—if you were assured that these impressions of death at Marshfield, of the ensign of the Republic everywhere in crape, of ten thousand men at a private funeral; that these were not reality, but only the dismal fancies of a dream,—that instead of being in his grave, Daniel Webster was still at his post, as a faithful sentinel on the watch-towers of Liberty —if you could hear there in the darkness of the night his veteran footstep—especially if you should ask as was our wont in a moment of fear, "*Watchman, what of the night?*" and your ear should suddenly be greeted with those grand old tones, so full, resonant and joyous—*All's well, all's well,*"—Oh! how this whole auditory would start to its feet; and what a burst of transport would shake this solid building to its base! But alas, these tears we are shedding, they are not the tears of joy, but of grief. And what event but the death of Webster, could have drawn from us so many? Had each of us lost his father, the stroke could hardly have fallen with more subduing effect. Why, here we touch the secret—*We have lost the second Father of his Country.* God in heaven, be thou the father of an orphaned people!

When in July, two years ago, death removed an incumbent of the Executive, so strong in the confidence of his countrymen, you well remember how bitter and how universal was the sense of bereavement. It is no disparagement to say that his great office was worthily supplied by his immediate successor. What too often had been only an ingenious stroke of flattery, might have been quoted in this instance of accession, with honesty and truth:

"*Sol occubuit; nox nulla secuta est.*" *

But now, ere yon moon had four times filled her horn, we are called upon to suffer the double eclipse of Clay and Webster. In lesser lights indeed the horizon is not wanting. And such is the tried prudence of the people themselves, and such, if they avail themselves of it, the reflected radience of luminaries no longer seen, that I do not say they will stumble and fall. But alas, alas! how long may we have to await the appearance again of two orbs of such magnitude and splendor, to fill our hearts with joy and our country with glory!

I know indeed the last accents of his lips—"*I still live;*" and I have marked with sensi-

* "The sun set; but no night followed."

bility the eagerness of the nation to extract from them something to solace its smitten feelings. Already in the valley of the shadow of death, it was in his mind only, that the soul had not yet glided from the shore of its mortality. In that solemn instant, it was farthest from him possible to indulge the thought of the ancient, "*vivit enim, vivet que semper.*" Yet the bleeding heart of the nation, so lonesome and desolate, is surely warranted in cherishing such a sentiment. All that was mortal of Daniel Webster, is indeed dead. In the presence of a great cloud of witnesses, it was committed to the sacred soil of the Pilgrims. But his words, his works, his wisdom; the influence of his example, patriotism and deeds—these were not so interred. Heaven vouchsafes to a few superior natures a life to come, even in this world. There are those who rule us from their urns. Yes,

> "Thou art mighty yet!"
> Thy spirit walks abroad."

Walk ever abroad, illustrious shade! Thy counsels and precepts are engraven on our memory; but oh, if in the economy of God, it is allowed to exert a directer influence—if patriots who die the death of the righteous are

ever permitted to revisit their earthly seats—then ever venerated spirit, infuse into thy countrymen yet more of thy prudence, self-devotion and wisdom!

The older editions of Mr. Webster's speeches, have on the back of the volume, a gold leaf figure of the Capitol at Washington. There is a fitness in this device. Consider how completely identified are his name and efforts with that great palace of the laws. With the House of Representatives, the Chamber of the Senate, the Supreme Federal Judicatory, and with the wing in course of erection, as orator at the laying of its corner-stone. Then what an expansive spirit of patriotism pervades those volumes: a school of rhetoric for the nation, instinct with nationality. In this respect, indeed, they are but the counterpart of his own feelings and character. Party and sectional foes might whisper suspicion with their lips; they might impugn his motives; they might wound his honor; and yet—who but one of his countrymen would credit it; and who that is a countryman disputes it?—it had come to be a piece of the American heart to believe, that Webster would see that the Republic suffered no harm.

That not only her interests, but her honor and her fame would come out of the fiery ordeal, as he himself would say, without the smell of fire upon her garments. You have all doubtless met the verses which represent a captain's son on board of a ship in a terrific tempest. Veteran sailors are in tears of despair, and marvelling at his calmness, they ask the boy, "Are you not afraid?" The noble little fellow, a very picture of surprise, glancing at the stern, asks his interrogators, "*Is not my father at the helm?*" Such was the abiding faith of the nation, in this more than Palinurus of the State. Whatever might be the peril, how dark soever the heavens,

"Though the strain'd mast should quiver as a reed,"

the people still asked, if you expressed alarm, "*Is not Webster at the helm?*"

Such was the universal sense of his fidelity and patriotism. Nor was it over estimated. Love of country, and of the whole country, was the ever present, and ever paramount passion of his being; it penetrated, and pervaded, and engrossed it. Applying the entire energies of his robust, luminous, and comprehensive intellect, to the high ministries of its constitution,

it was the great mission of his life, to defend and expound it, to illustrate and hallow. His first entry into public life was in the service of the whole Union; and the summons of death found him still in its harness. No sooner had his eye fallen on her constitution, than he folded it to his heart as the first love of his boyhood; and the latest stroke of his pen, ere it must be laid down forever, attests his loyalty and devotion. And having indentified himself conspicuously with every great interest at home, and more than any citizen of his time, enhanced her reputation abroad; in age, as in manhood, and in youth, still earlier than the sun in toiling for her glory; having thus exhausted his strength, his spirit, and his life, in the service of the country at large; he bequeathed at his death, to every American citizen, to every several man, in one massive and sumptuous assemblage, the rich inheritance of his name, his works, his example and renown.

I am afraid it is one of the solemn lessons of history that unto all states, as to men, it is appointed once to die. Certainly none now in existence gives more vigorous promise than that of England. And yet her eloquent historian

has permitted himself to anticipate a time when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London bridge, to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's. It is the most earnest prayer of every heart before me that the people may prove themselves so intelligent, virtuous and prudent, that the Capitol of the American Republic will stand forever. This, my friends, at least is sure; that while that great temple of Freedom does stand, it shall be as one vast Cenotaph to Webster. And as a sight of that hallowed dome, shall first recall to the beholder the memory of Webster; so shall come first to his lip, the epitaph now on the general heart of the nation: WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT.

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